Being an Advocate for Research

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University of California
Los Angeles, California

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#WORM2013
Overview

• The mood in Washington
• Why get involved in advocacy
• How to get involved in advocacy
• Advocacy resources

GSA Vice-President Vicki Chandler (center) with representatives of SFG and ASBMB at FASEB Capitol Hill Day
The mood in Washington
The mood in Washington

• Congress more focused on politics than substance
  – Focus on blame rather than compromise
  – Tensions all over: Democrat vs. Republican, Tea Party vs. others

• Major policy issues will drive the legislative agenda
  – Singular focus on spending and size of government
  – Focus on immigration, tax reform, gun control?
  – Research funding not a high priority

• Election season beginning for 2014 (and 2016)
  – 35 Senate seats are up for re-election (21 D, 14 R)
  – 5 Democrats and 3 Republicans are retiring

The mood in Washington

• What sequestration?
  – 5% across-the-board cut to all non-defense discretionary spending
  – “Once we ‘fixed’ FAA, everything is okay, right?”
  – Allows cuts to happen without anyone taking responsibility

• House and Senate are $92 billion apart on FY 2014 appropriations
  – Initial House numbers suggest 18+% cut to NIH!
  – Little discussion of individual spending bills
The mood in Washington

Appropriations Subcommittee allocations for fiscal year 2014 (compared to FY 2013 post-sequestration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcommittee</th>
<th>House</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>Capitol chasm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor-HHS-Education (incl NIH)</td>
<td>$122 billion</td>
<td>$164 billion</td>
<td>$42.5 billion apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↓ $28 B</td>
<td>↑ $14 B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce-Justice-Science (incl NSF)</td>
<td>$47 billion</td>
<td>$52 billion</td>
<td>$5.4 billion apart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↓ $4.2 B</td>
<td>↑ $1 B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>$19 billion</td>
<td>$21 billion</td>
<td>$1.5 billion apart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↑ $0.045 B</td>
<td>↑ $2 B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy &amp; Water (incl DOE)</td>
<td>$30 billion</td>
<td>$35 billion</td>
<td>$4.3 billion apart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>↓ $1.7 B</td>
<td>↑ $3 B</td>
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The mood in Washington

- What sequestration?
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- Need new champions for research
  - Few Members of Congress (or their staff) have backgrounds in science
  - Key supporters have retired
  - New faces on Appropriations Committee
New members of Appropriations Committees

- Tom Udall (D)
- Jeanne Shaheen (D)
- Jeff Merkley (D)
- Mark Begich (D)
- Mike Johanns (R)
- Jeff Fortenberry (R-01)
- Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-03)
- Mike Quigley (D-05)
- David Valadao (R-21)
- Mike Quigley (D-05)
- Chuck Fleischmann (R-03)
- Tim Ryan (D-13)
- David Joyce (R-14)
- Thomas Rooney (R-16)
- Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-23)
- John Boozman (R)
- Chellie Pingree (D-01)
- William Owens (D-21)
Scientists as Advocates

• Decisions in Washington have a direct impact on what you do
  – Budgets for federal research agencies
  – Laws and policies that impact research

• Scientists have credibility and expertise
  – This includes students and postdocs → you have the most at stake for the future of science

• Policymakers need to hear directly from you, their constituents

YOU are the best advocate for your interests
It’s convenient to help

Although we’d love to see you in Washington, there’s plenty to do at home:

• Follow your elected officials on Facebook and Twitter
• Participate in town halls and other public events—and ask questions
• Write op-eds and letters to the editor in your hometown newspaper
• Invite elected officials to visit your lab—and give them publicity when they do
• Give presentations about research to community and civic groups
Write to Congress

Whom do I contact?

www.house.gov

www.senate.gov
Being an effective messenger

• Be realistic
  – Large increases not tenable now
  – But targeted increases can be

• Be personal
  – Anecdotes can be more effective than data

• Be specific
  – Address one issue for each message or call

• Be a voter
  – Include your mailing address
Stay in your domain

• YOU are the expert in science—but you are probably not the expert in politics or taxes or defense

• Talk about why supporting research is important
  – Why do you do what you do?
  – How many people do you work with?
  – How does your research pay off for society?

• But don’t take the bait about what should be cut

• Don’t make up an answer
Advocacy Resources

• Sign up for e-advocacy lists

• Follow @GeneticsGSA and @FASEBopa

• FASEB has lots of data and resources (opa.faseb.org)
Any questions?

www.genetics-gsa.org

society@genetics-gsa.org

301-634-7300